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71 Applicant: **ELECTRIC POWER RESEARCH INSTITUTE, INC, 3412 Hillview Avenue, Palo Alto California 94303 (US)**

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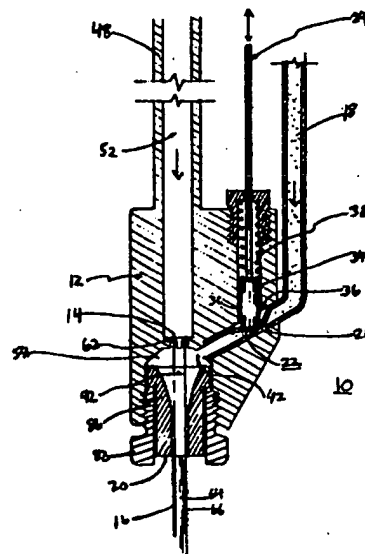
72 Inventor: **Yle, Gene G., 29244 59th Avenue South, Auburn Washington 98002 (US)**

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74 Representative: **Jackson, David Spence et al, REDDIE & GROSE 18, Theobalds Road, London, WC1X 8PL (GB)**

54 **Abrasive entrained high pressure fluid jet nozzle.**

57 A nozzle body (12) has a high pressure water inlet chamber (52) leading to a plurality of jet orifices (62) from which high pressure water jets (92) pass through a mixing chamber (54) with an exit defined by a nozzle mouth insert (20). Abrasive granules (18) are supplied through a flexible hose (26) received in a passage (42) in the body (12). A spring biased plunger (36) normally closes the hose (26) but can be retracted by a cable (24) to allow the granules (18) to pass from the passage (42) into the mixing chamber (54) where they are entrained by the jets (92).



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ABRASIVE ENTRAINED HIGH PRESSURE
FLUID JET NOZZLE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention:

5 The invention relates to high pressure fluid jet nozzle apparatus and in particular to a high pressure fluid jet nozzle having a means for entraining abrasive granules within a high pressure fluid jet and a means and method for preventing wetting and caking of the abrasive granules within the nozzle in the vicinity of the high pressure fluid jet.

Description of the prior art:

10 It has been known that a fluid jet, generated by pressurizing a fluid, such as water, and directing such pressurized fluid through a suitable orifice, can cut a wide variety of materials. Such waterjets are currently in use commercially. It has been known also that the capability of such water jets in cutting hard materials can be greatly enhanced by introducing solid particulates, such as
15 abrasives, into the jet stream to generate the so-called abrasive waterjet. In these abrasive waterjet processes, a

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key system component is the nozzle in which selected abrasives are introduced into the water stream. Many suitable abrasives for these processes are in the form of fine powder or dry granules that can cake up when wetted by fluid, thus blocking the flow. It would be desirable to have a high pressure fluid jet nozzle for entraining abrasive granules within a high pressure fluid jet such that the abrasive granules are kept dry within the nozzle in the vicinity of the high pressure fluid jet and thereby eliminate caking up and clogging of the nozzle at this location. This invention discloses a nozzle design that has an integrated check valve to prevent the wetting of dry abrasives prior to being mixed with the fluid stream. By virtue of this invention, the blockage of abrasive flow frequently encountered in abrasive waterjet processes can be avoided.

Another common problem experienced by nozzles of the prior art which admix abrasive granules with a high pressure fluid stream is erosive wear of the nozzle where the abrasive entrained high pressure fluid stream exits the nozzle. It would be desirable to have a high pressure fluid jet nozzle suitable for mixing abrasive granules with a high pressure fluid jet which will entrain the abrasive granules within the water jet to prevent extensive wear of the nozzle. It would also be desirable to have a high pressure

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fluid jet nozzle which will provide a predetermined pattern (including both converging and diverging) or multiple high pressure fluid streams to provide for cutting a corresponding kerf pattern.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 Briefly, the present invention is a high pressure fluid jet nozzle for entraining abrasive granules within a high pressure fluid jet that reduces erosive wear of the nozzle cone or exit orifice of the nozzle. The nozzle of the invention accomplishes this by disposing an orifice cone
10 having a predetermined orifice passage pattern in fluid communication with the high pressure fluid jet to provide a predetermined pattern of high pressure fluid streams defining an interior volume of ambient atmosphere such as for instance, defining a cylindrical wall pattern of high
15 pressure fluid streams. When the predetermined pattern of high pressure fluid streams entrains the abrasive granules, a large portion of the abrasive granules move to the interior volume within the predetermined pattern of fluid streams. When this predetermined pattern of fluid streams
20 with the entrained abrasive granules exit through a nozzle cone or other exit orifice of the nozzle, the large portion of the entrained abrasive granules do not impinge upon or wear the exit orifice or nozzle. The predetermined orifice

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in preferred embodiments of the invention provides for both converging and diverging patterns of high pressure fluid streams to cut corresponding kerf patterns. The nozzle of the invention also includes a valve means for positive control of the abrasive granules disposed in proximity to the predetermined pattern of high pressure fluid streams to prevent wetting and caking of the abrasive granules. The valve means of the invention includes an operatable plunger biased to collapse a flexible abrasive conduit or otherwise block the flow of abrasive granules. A method of operation of the high pressure fluid jet nozzle of the invention that prevents caking of the abrasive granules and clogging of the nozzle is also disclosed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention may be better understood and further advantages and uses thereof more readily apparent when considered in view of the following detailed description of exemplary embodiments, taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a cross-sectional view of an abrasive entrained high pressure fluid jet nozzle illustrating one embodiment of a valve means for preventing wetting and caking up of the abrasive granules, constructed according to the teachings of the invention;

Figure 2 is an abrasive entrained high pressure fluid jet nozzle for entraining abrasive granules within a

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predetermined pattern of high pressure fluid streams, constructed according to the teachings of the invention, illustrating a second embodiment of the valve means of the invention;

5 Figure 3 is a cross sectional view of an abrasive entrained high pressure fluid jet nozzle constructed according to the teachings of the invention, illustrating another embodiment of the valve means of the invention;

10 Figure 4 is a cross sectional view of a high pressure fluid jet nozzle for entraining high pressure fluid streams with abrasive granules, constructed according to the teachings of the invention, illustrating a pressure activated embodiment of the valve means of the invention;

15 Figure 5 is a top view of the high pressure fluid jet nozzle of Figure 4 illustrating the pressure actuated valve means of the invention;

20 Figure 6 is a cross sectional view of a high pressure fluid jet nozzle constructed according to the teachings of the invention illustrating the orifice means for entraining the abrasive granules within a predetermined pattern of high pressure fluid streams according to the teachings of the invention;

25 Figure 7 is an enlarged cross sectional view of an orifice cone as may be used in Figure 6 illustrating orifice passages and orifice disks inserted within each passage, respectively, to provide a predetermined pattern of high

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pressure fluid streams according to the teachings of the invention;

5 Figure 8 is a top view of the orifice cone of Figure 7 illustrating the predetermined location of the orifice passages each having an orifice disk inserted therein;

Figure 9 is a cross sectional view of an orifice cone to provide a converging pattern of high pressure fluid streams;

10 Figure 10 is a cross sectional view of an orifice cone to provide a diverging pattern of high pressure fluid streams;

Figure 11 is a top view of the orifice cone of either Figure 9 or 10 illustrating the predetermined location of the orifice passages;

15 Figure 12 is an elevational view of a hand held apparatus utilizing the abrasive entrained high pressure fluid jet nozzle of the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

20 Referring now to the drawings and to Figure 1 in particular, there is shown a cross sectional view of a high pressure fluid jet nozzle 10, including nozzle body 12, having orifice means 14 for generating a predetermined pattern of high pressure fluid streams 16 suitable for entraining abrasive granules 18 to provide for reducing wear of exit cone 20 as high pressure fluid streams 16 with entrained abrasives 18 leave nozzle 10. High pressure fluid

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jet nozzle 10 further includes valve means 22 for preventing wetting and caking of abrasive granules 18 within nozzle 10. Still referring to Figure 1 there is shown one embodiment of valve means 22 in which valve means 22 is
5 actuated manually by operating cable 24. Dry abrasives 18 enter in nozzle 10 through flexible hose 26 which, for example, can be made of soft plastic or rubber. Flexible hose 26 extends into nozzle body 12 such that flexible hose 26 is in communication with plunger 34 which is located in
10 plunger cavity 36 of nozzle body 12. Plunger 34 is biased by biasing means 38, which may be for example a helical spring, such that one end of plunger 34 compresses a predetermined portion of the side of flexible abrasive hose 26. The other end of plunger 34 is attached to cable 24 and
15 abuts biasing means 38. Pulling cable 24 would compress or charge spring biasing means 38 and disengage plunger 34 from compressing the side of abrasive hose 26 thus opening abrasive passage 42. By manipulating operating cable 24, abrasive passage 42 may be opened or closed at will by an
20 operator and fluid can be kept out of abrasive passage 42 completely. Since valve means 22 has no parts in contact with abrasive granules 18, it will last as long as the flexible abrasive hose 26, which for example may be made of natural or synthetic rubbers that are resistant to
25 abrasives and are expected to have a long useful life.

Again referring to Figure 1, nozzle body 12 is machined

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out of suitable metal or other wear resistant materials, and is adapted for connection to a source of high pressure fluid shown generally at 48. High pressure fluid jet nozzle 10 includes high pressure water chamber 52 and nozzle cavity 54 disposed within nozzle body 12. Orifice means 14 is disposed in nozzle cavity 54 and includes multiple water orifices 62 arranged in a predetermined pattern to generate a predetermined pattern of high pressure fluid streams 16 of desired characteristics.

The multiple high pressure fluid streams 14 define an interior volume 64 and an exterior volume 66 which exterior volume 66 is shrouded by exit cone 20 which conforms to the exterior volume 66 of the multiple high pressure fluid jet pattern. Exit cone 20 is held in place by nozzle support nut 82. Exit cone 20 has a tapered interior passage 86 conforming to the exterior shape of high pressure fluid stream 14 and is made of wear resistant materials, such as for example, carbide, ceramics or hardened steel. The interior cavity of exit cone 20 and orifice means 14 form mixing chamber 92 that is in communication with abrasive passage 42 entering into mixing chamber 92 at a suitable predetermined angle. Orifice means 14 will be described in further detail later in the detailed description of Figures 7 through 11.

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Referring now to Figure 2 there is shown a cross sectional view of another embodiment of abrasive valve means 22 of the invention in which the abrasive valve means 22 is also operated with a cable and a spring loaded plunger. However now valve means 22 includes plunger 102 which again can be made of for example, wear resistant plastic, rubber, or metal. Plunger 102 is in direct contact with the abrasive flow and is sealed in a cylindrical plunger cavity 104 in direct communication with abrasive passage 106. By pulling the external cable 108, plunger 102 is moved away from its seated position within cylindrical plunger cavity 104, thus opening the abrasive passage to the mixing chamber 112.

Referring now to Figure 3 there is shown a cross-sectional view of another embodiment of the abrasive valve means of the invention in which the abrasive valve means is actuated by means of solenoid operated plunger 114. Solenoid operated plunger 114 normally compresses flexible abrasive hose 116 by the action of spring biasing means 118 thus keeping moisture out of abrasive passage 122. Plunger 124 is made of magnetic materials such as for example, steel, and is surrounded by operating solenoid 126. Thus when solenoid 126 is energized, plunger 124 will move away from and disengage itself from flexible abrasive hose 116 thus allowing abrasive granules to be introduced into the mixing chamber 128. An electric cable 132 connects solenoid

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126 to a power source and a control switch. Solenoid 126 is sealed off from environmental elements to ensure trouble free operation by means of, for example, plastic resin 134.

5 Referring now to Figure 4 there is shown a cross-sectional view of still another embodiment of the abrasive valve means of the invention in which the abrasive valve means is actuated by the water pressure inside the high pressure chamber 142 of high pressure fluid jet nozzle 144 through a sliding plunger 146. When the fluid pressure is interrupted , biasing means spring 148 pushes plunger 146
10 toward high pressure chamber 142 and pinches flexible abrasive hose 152 thus closing abrasive passage 154. When the fluid pressure is turned on, high pressure fluid pushes plunger 146 compressing biasing means spring 148, thus
15 relieving pressure on the side of abrasive hose 152 to restore passage 154.

Referring now to Figure 5 there is shown a top cross sectional view of this fluid actuated abrasive valving means of Figure 4 illustrating the shape of sliding plunger 146
20 and how it impinges on the flexible abrasive hose 152. One end of plunger 146 is in contact with flexible abrasive hose 152 and is in the shape of a half sphere sized to fit abrasive hose 152. By action of the biasing means spring 148, flexible abrasive hose 152 can be completely closed to
25 keep moisture out of abrasive passage 154. Sliding plunger

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146 has an o-ring seal 156 at one end and is stopped by
retainer 158 at the other end. Thus the movement of sliding
plunger 146 is confined within the range necessary for
opening and closing flexible abrasive hose 152. O-ring seal
5 156 keeps the high pressure fluid sealed within the high
pressure chamber. The diameter of plunger 146 and the force
of biasing spring 148 are designed according to the high
pressure fluid encountered such that positive opening of the
flexible abrasive hose 152 is ensured as soon as the fluid
10 pressure inside the high pressure chamber reaches a
predetermined level. This fluid actuated abrasive valving
means has the advantage of being automatic, requiring no
manipulation from an operator. This automatic valving means
allows the abrasive valving means to open automatically when
15 the water pressure is turned on and to close when the water
pressure is turned off, thus preventing water from entering
into the abrasive line and eliminating the possibility of
human error in operating manual valves. This valve can be
incorporated with an integral electrical switch which can be
20 used to operate an abrasive dispensing system.

Referring now to Figure 6 there is shown a cross-
sectional view of high pressure fluid jet nozzle 160
illustrating in detail orifice means 162 for generating a
predetermined pattern of high pressure fluid streams 164
25 according to the teachings of the invention. High pressure
fluid nozzle 160 includes nozzle body 172 having a

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cylindrical through passage 174 an abrasive inlet 176 and a cylindrical cavity 178 for housing an abrasive valve means 182. The upper end of cylindrical through passage 174 is connected to a high pressure tube 184 through which
5 pressurized fluid is transported from high pressure tube 184 to orifice means 162. Orifice means 162 includes orifice cone 192 having tapered surfaces 194 which mate with one end of high pressure tube 184. Orifice cone 192 has multiple high precision orifices 196 and is sealed against nozzle
10 body 172. Below orifice cone 192 and inside through passage 174 of nozzle body 172 is a mixing cavity 188 in which abrasive particles enter through abrasive passage 244. A nozzle cone 204 made of wear resistant materials is inserted into the other end of the cylindrical through passage 174 at
15 206. Nozzle cone 204 has a tapered interior passage to form a throat 214 at the exit and also has a tapered exterior tip 216. The diameter of the bore of the throat is just slightly larger than the diameter of the jet bundle (high pressure fluid steams) 218 issued by the multiple orifice
20 cones 196 at the location of the nozzle cone 204 which has threads 222 to allow for adjustment of its axial position along the fluid jet bundle. Abrasive valve means 182 of the invention consists of a plunger 232, a spring 234, a cap 236, and a cable 238. The plunger 232 is normally seated at
25 a lower position 242 shown drawing in phantom in Figure 6, thus closing the abrasive passage 244, by the force of the

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spring 234. When the cable 238 is pulled, the plunger 232 is lifted to open the abrasive passage 244. By virtue of this abrasive valve means 182, the fluid can be kept out of the abrasive passage 244, thus avoiding blockage of this passage, as explained earlier with reference to Figures 1 through 5.

Referring now to Figure 7 there is shown a cross sectional view of another embodiment of orifice means 192 of this invention. Orifice cone 232 has a concave sealing surface 234 for mating with high pressure tubing and nine orifices arranged so eight orifices 236 are placed in a circular pattern while the ninth orifice 238 is situated at the center. Inserted into the nine orifices are separate orifice disks 242 made of very hard materials such as sapphire, ruby, hard ceramics, tungsten carbide, boron carbide or hardened steel. The orifice disks 242 are mounted in recesses drilled into the stainless steel orifice cone and are positioned to issue fluid jets that are parallel to each other.

Referring now to Figure 8 there is shown a top view of the orifice of Figure 7 illustrating the predetermined location of the orifice passages.

Referring now to Figure 9 and 10 there are shown other embodiments of orifice means 192 constructed according to the teachings of the invention and in Figure 11 there is a top view of both. Figures 9 and 10 illustrates that the

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orifice passages 252 may be disposed at predetermined angles to provide either converging point high pressured fluid jet streams (Figure 9), or diverging point high pressure fluid jet streams (Figure 10).

5 Referring now to Figure 12 there is shown an elevational view of a hand held tool 260 utilizing the abrasive entrained high pressure fluid jet nozzle of this invention. Tool 260 includes high pressure fluid jet nozzle 262 suitable for entraining abrasives within a predetermined high pressure fluid jet stream pattern such as that shown at 264. Hand held tool 260, further includes handle 266, 10 abrasive valve trigger 268, and operating cable 272, all suitable for operating check valve means 270 for preventing wetting and caking of abrasive granules within nozzle 262 as herein before described. Hand held tool 260 further 15 includes fluid valve 274 and fluid valve trigger 276, suitable for opening and interrupting the fluid flow from high pressure fluid hose 278 into high pressure fluid tube 282. Hand held tool 260 further includes abrasive hose 284 20 and shoulder support 286. In operation fluid valve trigger 276 is first depressed to allow passage of high pressure fluid from high pressure fluid hose 278 through high pressure fluid tube 282 into abrasive entrained high pressure fluid jet nozzle 262. Secondly, abrasive valve 25 trigger 268 is depressed to allow passage of abrasive granules through check valve means 270, in order to allow

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the abrasive granules to be entrained within predetermined water jet pattern 264. To stop operating hand held tool 260, first abrasive valve trigger 268 is released thereby interrupting passage of the source of abrasive granules by
5 means of check valve means 270 into high pressure water jet nozzle 262 and secondly fluid valve trigger 276 is released to interrupt passage of high pressure fluid into high pressure fluid jet nozzle body 262. If a pressure activated check valve means as described in Figures 4 and 5 were
10 incorporated in hand held tool 10 as depicted in Figure 12, then of course abrasive valve handle 266 and abrasive valve trigger 268 as well as operating cable 272 would be eliminated because check valve means 270 would now be operated by the fluid pressure within high pressure jet
15 nozzle body 262. In such were the case, during the method of operation discribed above, the opening of the passages of high pressure fluid and the abrasive granules would occur simultaneously as would the interruption of the passage of the abrasive granules and the high pressure fluid. By
20 sequentially operating these two valves, water can be kept out of the abrasive passage completely even if this tool were held at an unfavorable angle.

In conclusion the teachings of the invention include a check valve means for keeping water out of the abrasive
25 passage of an abrasive high pressure water jet nozzle, and an orifice means for generating a predetermined pattern of

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high pressure fluid streams having an interior and exterior
volume for entraining abrasive granules in the interior
volume to eliminate or greatly reduce nozzle wear. The
check valve means, according to the teachings of the
5 invention, could potentially be used in various forms,
depending upon the mechanism of actuation, several
embodiments having been illustrated infra.

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CLAIMS

1. A high pressure water jet nozzle for entraining an abrasive

material within a high pressure water jet, comprising:

5 a) A nozzle body adapted for fluid communication with a high pressure fluid and a source of abrasive materials; and

10 b) orifice means disposed in said nozzle body so as to be in fluid communication with said high pressure fluid for dividing said high pressure fluid into a predetermined pattern of smaller high pressure fluid streams, said predetermined pattern of high pressure fluid streams defining an interior volume to provide for entraining said abrasive granules within said interior volume to reduce abrasive wear on said nozzle as said predetermined pattern
15 of high pressure abrasive entrained fluid streams exit said nozzle.

20 2. The high pressure water jet nozzle of Claim 1 wherein said orifice means includes an orifice cone disposed within said nozzle body so as to be in fluid communication with said high pressure fluid, said orifice cone having orifice passage disposed there through at predetermined locations to provide said predetermined pattern of high pressure fluid streams.

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3. The high pressure water jet nozzle of claim 2 wherein said orifice passages are disposed within said orifice cone to provide a converging pattern of high pressure fluid streams.

5 4. The high pressure water jet nozzle of claim 2 wherein said orifice passages are disposed within said orifice cone to provide a diverging pattern of high pressure fluid streams.

10 5. The high pressure water jet nozzle of Claim 2 further including orifice disks disposed within said orifice cone passages.

6. A high pressure fluid jet nozzle for entraining an abrasive material within a high pressure fluid jet, comprising:

15 a) a nozzle body adapted for fluid communication with a source of high pressure fluid and a source of abrasive granules, said nozzle body having an interior mixing cavity wherein the abrasive granules are mixed with high pressure fluid streams; and

20 b) valve means for interrupting and isolating said source of abrasive granules from said mixing cavity disposed in said nozzle body approximate the location of said mixing cavity.

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7. The high pressure water jet nozzle of Claim 6 wherein said valve means includes a flexible abrasive conduit disposed within said nozzle approximate said mixing cavity, a plunger adjacent said flexible abrasive conduit and a
5 biasing means to urge said plunger against said flexible abrasive conduit portion to prevent the passage of abrasive granules; and means for retracting said biased plunger away from said flexible abrasive conduit to allow abrasive granules to pass thru said flexible abrasive conduit into
10 said mixing chamber.

8. The high pressure water jet nozzle of Claim 6 wherein said valve means includes an abrasive conduit disposed within said nozzle, a plunger disposed within said abrasive conduit to interrupt and isolate said abrasive granules from
15 said mixing chamber and biasing means to urging said plunger within said abrasive conduit and a means for removing said biased plunger from said abrasive conduit to allow abrasive granules to pass into said mixing chamber.

9. A method of operating a high pressure water jet tool
20 having an abrasive entrained high pressure fluid jet nozzle adapted for fluid communication with a source of high pressure fluid and to a source of abrasive granules, a fluid valve for interrupting said source of high pressure fluid, and a check valve means for interrupting and isolating said

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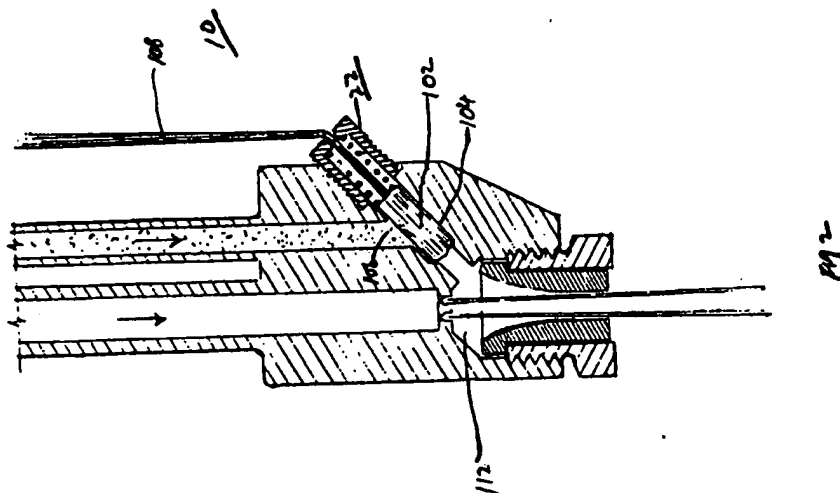
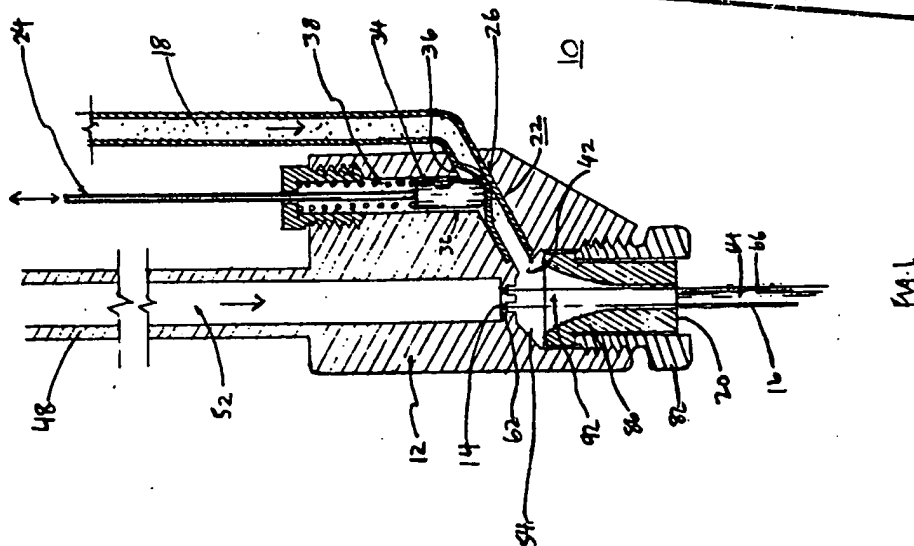
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abrasive granules from said high pressure fluid, comprising the steps of:

- a) first, allow passage of said high pressure fluid;
- b) second, allow passage of said abrasive granules;
- 5 c) third, interrupt passage of said source of abrasive granules by means of said check valve means;
- d) fourth, interrupt passage of said high pressure fluid.

10 10. The method of operating a high pressure water jet tool of Claim 7 where first, steps a) and b) are performed simultaneously and second, steps c) and d) are performed simultaneously.

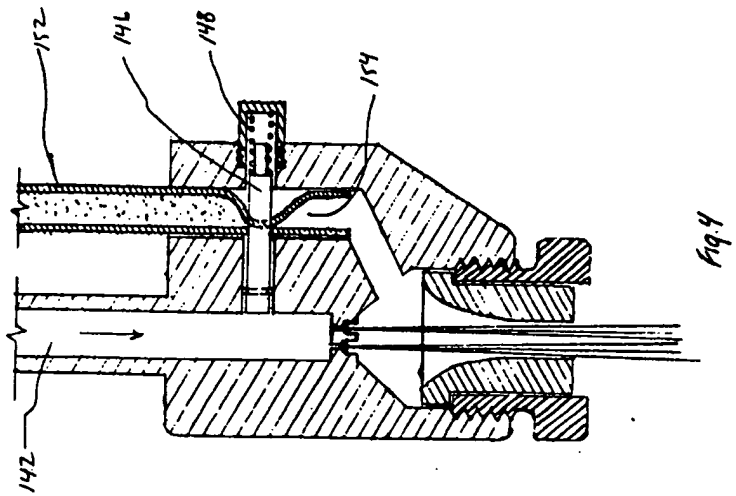
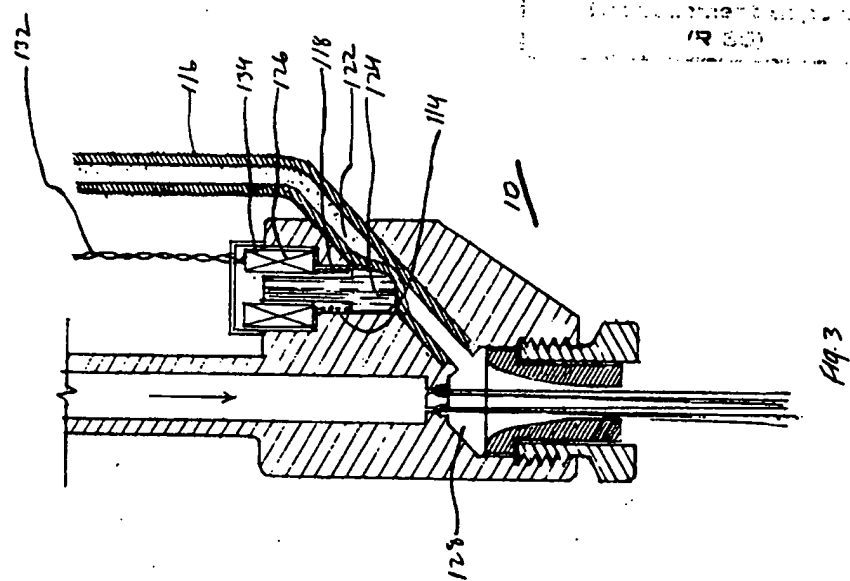
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FIG. 3



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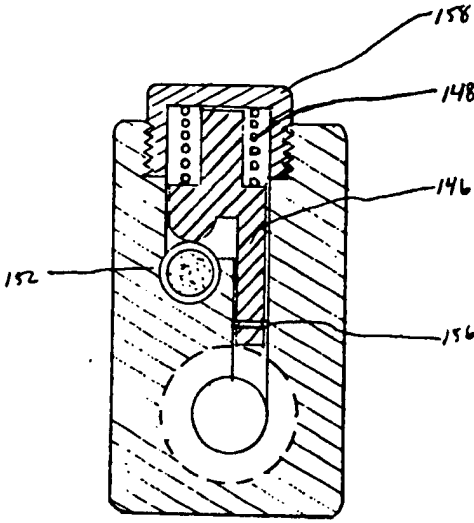


Fig. 5

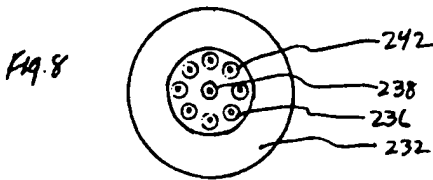


Fig. 8

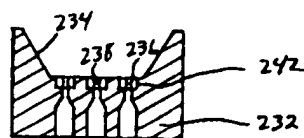


Fig. 7

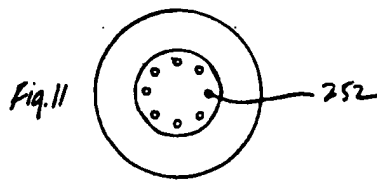


Fig. 11

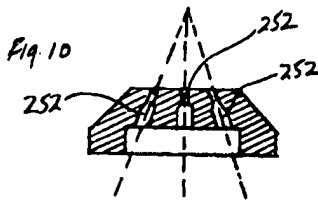


Fig. 10

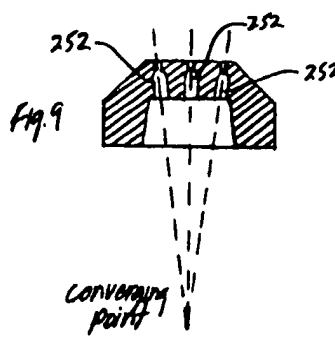
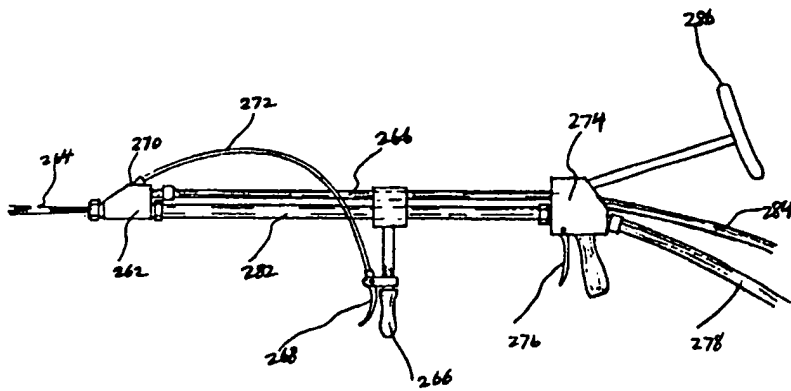
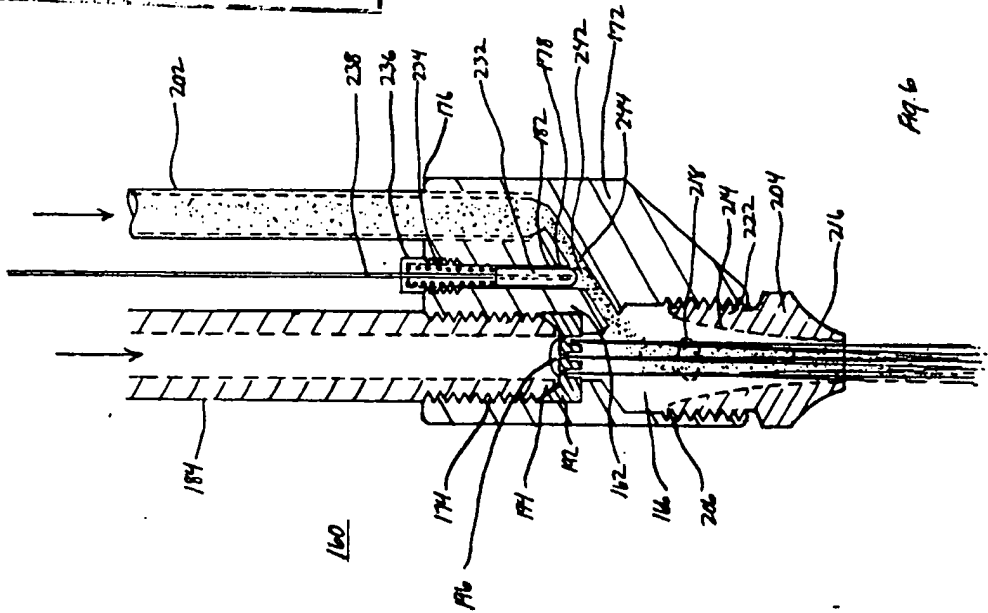


Fig. 9

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European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application number

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			EP 86308230.1
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl. 4)
X	DE - A1 - 2 928 698 (NATIONAL RE-SEARCH) * Totality * --	1-6	B 26 F 3/00
A	GB - A - 2 025 794 (FRANK) * Totality * --	1	
A	GB - A - 1 376 164 (HINCKLEYS) * Fig. 1,5-7 * ----	1	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl. 4)
			B 26 F B 05 B B 28 B B 28 D
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search VIENNA		Date of completion of the search 14-01-1987	Examiner HOFMANN
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

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